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ART. I. *Prayer for the prosperity of Zion*—A SERMON.

[Written by the late Rev. FRANCIS PRINGLE, shortly before his death, in the 85th year of his age.]

Ps. li. 18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion : build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

THE Lord is sovereign, he doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this lower world. His sovereignty is conspicuous in all his works, but especially in his dispensations towards, and concerning his church. It shines in the favors shown to his ancient people. He chose them to be a peculiar people to himself, above all people on the face of the earth. He established his worship among them, and was pleased to fix upon Zion and Jerusalem as the centre of that worship, the city of their solemnities, placing his name there. This he did without any ground of preference in that people, or in that place, but to display his adorable sovereignty, and to serve the ends of his own glory, in the preservation and support of the true religion, and for the good of his church. *In Jerusalem were set the thrones of judgment : the thrones of the house of David.* David, whom, for the glory of his sovereign and distinguishing favor, he chose to be *his servant, taking him from the sheepfolds ; from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.*

David manifested an ardent zeal, a pious solicitude for the honor of divine worship, and the ordinances thereof. He was particularly anxious to provide a decent and honorable accommodation for the ark of the covenant, that eminent symbol of God's gracious presence with, and powerful protection of his people ; placing it in a tabernacle prepared for it, near his own palace in Jerusalem : thus *finding out a place for the Lord ; an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.* He projected also the building of a magnificent temple to the honor, and for the worship of Jehovah. The Lord approved the pious design, but forbade the execution, reserving that work to the peaceable reign of his son and successor, Solomon.

But how disgracefully to his character, was this man after God's own heart left to act, when guilty of the complicated crime, to which there is a reference in this Psalm.—An awful warning to him *that thinketh he standeth, to take heed lest he fall.* His base, adulterous connection with Bathsheba, and his deliberate, treacherous murder of her husband, Uriah, are indelible stains upon his memory ; gave great occasion to the enemy to blaspheme ; threatened very evil consequences to the church of God,

and the interests of religion; and provoked the Lord's dreadful displeasure. This Psalm exhibits David's deep sorrow and repentance; his humble confession, and importunate supplications for pardoning and sanctifying grace, and for renewed peace and comfort.

But while the royal penitent is solicitous to have all his sins forgiven, and to experience the returning tokens of the divine favor to himself, he is not forgetful of the interests of religion, or of the church. That no lasting injuries might arise to the church from his fall; nay, that the Lord would graciously exert himself in her favor; forms a distinguished and important article in the series of David's supplications, *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem.* When Zion and Jerusalem are mentioned distinctly, Jerusalem means the city, which after it was taken from the Jebusites, was the metropolis of the kingdom of Israel during the reigns of David and Solomon; and after the revolt of the ten tribes, of the kingdom of Judah. Zion is that part of the city of Jerusalem, which David strongly fortified, which he beautified with magnificent buildings, and called by his own name, the city of David. As it was the centre of the worship which God established and appointed to be celebrated by and among his people Israel, God is said to dwell there. Hence Zion and Jerusalem are frequently represented as typical of the gospel church, the true city of the living God, where he delights to dwell, to reveal his truth and his will, and to display his glory for the salvation and happiness of his people. A prayer, therefore, for Zion and Jerusalem is to be considered as expressive of a concern and desire for the Lord's protecting, blessing and prospering his church. *Do good, show favor, manifest kindness, have mercy on Zion.* The following clause serves to illustrate, explain and amplify this request,—*build up the walls of Jerusalem*: walls about a city are for defence against enemies. The text accordingly contains a prayer for the Lord's affording safety and protection to his church, prospering her interests, her increase in number, blessing ordinances for the gathering in of his elect, and promoting the edification of his people in faith and love, in holiness and harmony. Lastly, observe the spring of such favor; the Lord's good pleasure, his free will and sovereign goodness.

All that is farther proposed, is to offer some remarks suggested by the passage, with a few inferences.

REM. 1. The church is the peculiar object of divine care, favor and good will.

The prayer in the text proceeds upon a confidence of this being the case. And the truth of the proposition must be so obvious to every one, upon even a cursory view of the inspired oracles, and of the dispensations of divine providence towards her, that there appears no great need to enlarge in proof of it. The language of endearing affection so frequently employed concerning Zion and Jerusalem, whatever application it may bear to them literally, can be understood in its full import, only when referred to the church of God. *The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion—the city of the great King. There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early. They shall call thee, the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.* The characters by which she is designated and distinguished, justify the remark. She is the house of God, the church of the living God, the city of the great King, his husbandry, his building, a holy

Temple to the Lord, a habitation of God through the Spirit, the household of faith, the flock of God, his peculiar people, his treasure, his jewels, the lot of his inheritance, his beloved, the dearly beloved of his soul, the spouse of Christ, his bride, his love, his dove, his undefiled, his body, the fulness of him who filleth all in all. The most endearing names, indeed, are every where in scripture, used concerning the church, expressive of the affectionate regard of the Most High. The predictions and promises of the Almighty to and about her, and the dispensations of providence towards her, preserving, defending, delivering, and taking vengeance upon her enemies, might all be adduced in proof of the remark. But superior to all other testimonies of the divine regard to the church, is the triumphant display of sovereign grace and infinite love, in her salvation by the eternal, only begotten son of God. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Christ loved the church and gave himself for her."

REM. 2. Whatever God does in behalf of his church, is the effect of his mere good pleasure. He indeed "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure, they are and were created." "And the Lord chose Jacob unto himself and Israel for his peculiar treasure." To what cause is this to be ascribed?—his own sovereign good pleasure: "For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that he did." When Moses celebrates the distinguishing favor of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to their posterity, he warns them against the proud, self-flattering conceit, as if, personally, they possessed some superior worth, giving them a title to such distinction. "Speak not thou in thine heart—saying, For my righteousness, the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land." "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people (for ye were the fewest of all people;) but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers." Was there any thing in literal Zion or Jerusalem, that could be supposed to induce the Lord of all, to place his name there, to desire and choose Zion for the place of his rest? Zion has its name from aridness. It appears to have been originally a dry, unfruitful, worthless ridge or top of a mountain, and derives all its distinction from God's free choice of it to be the centre of the Old Testament worship; and Jerusalem, from his appointment of it to be the city of his solemnities, the royal city, and from the privileges connected therewith. And in this view, do they not serve for an emblem of the original state and the gracious state of church members, the stones in the spiritual building? What are they by nature, but wretched, and miserable, poor, blind and naked,—“Dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath, even as others:—alienated from the life of God; the slaves of sin, and of their father, the devil; having hearts deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; their carnal mind enmity against God, not subject to his law—compared to wolves, leopards and lions, bears and serpents, for treachery, cunning, cruelty, rapacity, violence and malignity? Isa. xi. Correspondent with this is the character, given by himself, of one who was called by divine grace, not only to form a part of the spiritual building, but to be a master builder. "I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy." For helplessness, deformity and loathsomeness, she resembles the new born infant cast out into the open field, to the loathing of her person, none pitying or having compassion: "We

ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." To infinite love then, absolutely free, sovereign, unspeakably rich grace, must be ascribed all that God hath done in and for the salvation of the church. "As he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us; even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved.)"

REM. 3. The glory of building up the church belongs only to the Lord. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Upon this rock will I build my church, is a declaration which could be made by none, but the Great God, our Saviour. This work is as far beyond all human skill and strength, as it is beyond the power of any man to redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him." What, the Redeemer says, with respect to the purchase of redemption, holds equally true with regard to the actual redemption of every individual who is saved. "I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation." The character of such as compose the church of true believers, above described, duly pondered, furnishes irresistible evidence of the truth of the proposition. Blind, and prejudiced against the truth, by one another, and by the God of this world, voluntary slaves of sin and satan, what man, what creature, can deliver out of this deplorable condition? In carrying on this work of building the church, it has pleased the Lord of all, to employ and honor mortals, and, in certain respects, other creatures also, visible and invisible, as his instruments. In a special manner, he has given pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. But does he employ them, because he stands in absolute need of them, or because of any fitness they naturally possess in themselves? Far from it. After the most laborious exertion of their talents, "neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth." In the very passage in which Paul speaks of ministers as laborers together with God, and of himself as a wise master builder, he calls the church God's building. The spittle did as much to open the man's eyes who was born blind; the shadow of Peter as much to the healing of the diseased over whom it passed; the waters of Jordan to the cleansing and curing of the leper; as all ministerial instruments can do towards the true building of the church, in converting those who are yet in their sins, or edifying those already converted,—farther than that they are means adapted to the reasonable and moral nature of man. All their motions, operations and success, depend entirely on the Lord. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Since then the instruments of God's own providing and appointing, have no inherent, efficacious influence in building up gospel Jerusalem, we are sure that whenever it is effected, it must be the work of God himself. Other houses are built by men, but he that builds the church, the house of God, is no other than he who built all things, that is, no other than he whose name is called the Mighty God, who laid the foundation of the heaven and the earth. "Even he shall build the Temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory."

REM. 4. The genuine children of Zion, those who are really among the living in Jerusalem, will take a lively interest in the welfare of the church. The same spirit, in a measure, animates them all, which the

royal Psalmist so feelingly expresses, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." The peace and true prosperity of Zion, involve the glory of the Redeemer, and the best interests of mankind. When genuine christianity is professed, the truth of the gospel maintained, ordinances regularly and faithfully dispensed, and accompanied with divine energy in the conversion and salvation of souls, and in a conversation becoming the gospel, in which things the true glory and prosperity of the church consist;—God is glorified, the Redeemer sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied, and mankind have their true, their best interests secured and promoted. To be deeply concerned about these things, is the native fruit of a mind renewed after the image of God, and will lead us to be followers, imitators of God, as dear children. For Zion is the constant object of his peculiar regard. His eyes and his heart are continually upon his church from the beginning of the year to the end of it. It would please the adversary, if it could be said with truth, "This is Zion whom no man seeketh after." But there is a remnant in every age whose cordial wish is, "peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

REM. 5. One principal way by which the friends of Zion will testify their regard and concern for the church, is prayer. Other means have their use, and are not to be neglected. Some are called to more public exertions in her cause than others, particularly ministers, and other office bearers in the house of God. Pastors and teachers are expressly said to be given for the edifying of the body of Christ. At *this* they are to aim in all their ministerial labors, preaching and teaching; in all their instructions, public and private, enforced by a good example; being "examples of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." "In all things showing themselves patterns of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." But every one in his proper sphere has something to do for the propagation of religion, and the welfare of the church. But whatever other means are used, whatever good instructions, good examples, or contributing of our substance, prayer is especially to be attended to. Those who may have little else in their power, have access to this, and every other method, without this will prove abortive. To this means our Lord directs, when he teaches us to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." This method of showing our concern for Zion, is current in scripture. Many examples of such prayers are on record. "Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted." "Return, O Lord, how long! and let it repent thee concerning thy servants." "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." "Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary, that is desolate, for the Lord's sake." "Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance." "Revive thy work in the midst of the years,—in wrath remember mercy."

In praying for the welfare of Zion, we can be at no loss for pleas wherewith to enforce our requests, or for topics of encouragement. A few may be mentioned; particularly,—

God's interest in his church, and his new covenant relations to her.

She is his by manifold strong and endearing ties. He is her founder, the Lord hath founded Zion; her builder, her God, head and husband, protector, ruler and governor. "The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, to all generations." "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Zion." "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee." "For I saith the Lord, will be a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." Nay, "God purchased the church with his own blood." "He loved the church, and gave himself for her." So that she is his purchase, his property and possession. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved." "He will feed his flock like a shepherd."—

What he has done for her. What he did for the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, redeeming them from their bondage in Egypt, by a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm, and by a train of astonishing providences, forming them into a church and nation, providing them with various ordinances of religion, settling them in the promised land, preserving, multiplying, prospering, chastising and delivering—may all be regarded as typical of what he has done for the true Israel, the church of the living God. He hath visited and redeemed his people. He hath appointed ordinances for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of such as, through grace believe; he hath maintained his church hitherto, through much opposition from hell and earth, so that a succession of faithful witnesses to the truth of the gospel, and for the purity of ordinances, has been raised up in all past ages. At the Reformation from Popery especially, his power was gloriously displayed. And many have been the signal appearances of our God, in behalf of a covenanted Reformation, in the days of our fathers, the good effects of which have reached down to the present time. Of the truth of this, we are witnesses. "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."—

What he promises to do. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God"—Things relative to the safety, and perpetuity, and enlargement of the church, her increase in members, in purity, peace, honor and prosperity. "No weapon formed against Zion shall prosper." "The Messiah's dominion shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." "I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn unto David my servant. Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; and he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." "Now faithful is he who hath promised, who will also do it." "The mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it." And as infallibly securing such glorious results, let us rejoice in the assurance of the rich supplies of the Holy Spirit. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty; and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."—

The connexion of God's glory with the prosperity of the church.—
"When the Lord shall build up Zion, he will appear in his glory."

The call to be so exercised. We are directed to "pray always with all prayer and supplication." "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."—"Remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind." "For Zion's sake, I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth." "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in all the earth."—

Our own interest,—the interests of our souls, present and future, are involved in, and connected with the Lord's building up of Jerusalem. When the Lord pours out his Spirit, blesses his ordinances, and communicates of his rich grace, "abundantly blessing Zion's provision, and satisfying her poor with bread; clothing her priests with salvation; and making her saints shout for joy"—what refreshment, what abundance of peace, joy and comfort is experienced.—

The interest of the present generation, for whose profiting by the means of grace, we ought to be much concerned; and also of posterity. Natural affection prompts parents to care for their offspring, to wish their happiness, and to adopt such measures as are competent to them, for promoting and securing it. But true happiness is in proportion to the prevalence of true religion, the success of the gospel, and the prosperity of the church. "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."

In all this exercise, we should call to our aid, and take special encouragement from a realizing persuasion of Christ's continual intercession for the church's preservation, sanctification and unity, of which we have a blessed specimen in his prayer. John xvii.

REM. 6. A penitent spirit will especially show its concern for the church, in earnest prayer for her prosperity. The example of David in the text, justifies the assertion. The Psalm is expressive of his sincere and deep repentance for his sin, particularly in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba. To think of the great occasion he had given to the enemy to blaspheme, of the reproach he had brought upon religion, and of the hurtful consequences it was likely to have upon the best interests of the church; could not but excite the most bitter sorrow and anguish in his soul. To counteract, as far as possible, the baneful influence of his grievous fall, he, no doubt felt a strong obligation to exert himself to the utmost to repair the injury, to recommend religion by a holy, penitent, circumspect, exemplary deportment; and a fear, lest the Lord might be provoked by his enormous, aggravated offence, to forsake his ordinances, and write *Ichabod* upon his worshipping assemblies; combined with a conviction, that all endeavors to revive religion, and prosper the interests of Zion, would have no success, without his gracious blessing, stirred him up to pray, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem." The same sentiment will prevail with true penitents in every age of the church. They are of a public spirit, and apprehensive, lest by their sins, they should be as Achans in the camp, troublers of Israel,—how earnest will they be in their prayers, that the Lord would redeem Israel from all his iniquities, and in this way from all his troubles.

INF. 1. The high honor of all whose hearts the Lord stirs up to lay

themselves out to promote the cause of true religion, and genuine christianity, and thus contribute to the best interests of gospel Jerusalem.— This honor have all his saints, in whatever sphere they move, wide or narrow, public or private. They are builders together with God. Those indeed in public office in the church, especially ministers, are, in their official capacity, characterised builders: and what an honor to be employed as such. “The work itself is great and honorable, building an habitation for God to dwell in; whose house are we. Ye are the temple of the living God. Christ himself sustains the character of the foundation, the chief corner stone, the supreme builder. You are God’s building. And ministers are co-workers with and under him. And those who are faithful, while a glory, an honor is derived to them from the work itself, are assured of a glorious reward to follow. “When the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that faideth not away.” “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

INF. 2. Consolation and encouragement to the children of Zion. The building of the church shall make progress. It is the doing of the Lord. His glory is interested in it. And the combined opposition of hell and earth, shall not be able to prevent the carrying it on, and bringing it to perfection in the consummate holiness and felicity of the whole church of the redeemed, to the full manifestation of the glory of a three one God. “All that the father hath given me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”— “And this is the father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should loose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” “Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it.”

INF. 3. Ground of lamentation. That so many professing christians show such apathy, such supine indifference about the true building of the church, the maintenance and advancement of the religion taught in the scriptures. What multitudes of such care for none of these things!— That so great opposition is made to the truth as it is in Jesus, in many important articles, by not a few who profess the christian religion. That if they lay the foundation, many build upon it, the wood, hay and stubble of extravagant fancies and vain delusions. It is especially grievous to observe among the professed friends of a covenanted Reformation many instances of conduct, inconsistent with genuine, well directed zeal for the edification of the body. With them, even with them, are to be found, in this respect, sins against the Holy One of Israel.

But while many things are for a lamentation, would it not argue a criminal inattention to the doings of the Lord, and the operations of his hand, to overlook the zealous efforts which have been made, and still are making, with increasing energy, by religious bodies of different name, for spreading the gospel, and particularly by the translation of the holy scriptures into the vulgar tongues of the heathen nations, and taking such active measures for the dissemination of the word of life among the many millions of the human race, who have been sitting in darkness, in the region and shadow of death. The times in which we live are particularly distinguished by a remarkable zeal for diffusing by such means, the light of the gospel, to the remotest nations of the earth. Should not our minds be filled with joy, and thankfulness, on such accounts, and our zeal animated to promote, in our respective places, the common cause of Christianity?

Ministers, especially, should be excited, by the foregoing considerations, to exert themselves, in the exercise of their office, individually and unitedly, to promote the edification of the church, more particularly that part placed under their immediate care; "taking heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Imitating the Apostle, who says, "we do all things for your edifying." The relation which they stand in to the church by office, a regard to the honor of God, the glory of Christ, their present usefulness and comfort, and their final account, with other considerations, will doubtless have weight with all, who deserve to be accounted ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, to have that important object still in view. And whatever be their labors, and their success,—to be denied to themselves, and to give all the praise to the Lord. And while they give themselves to the ministry of the word, let them be no less attentive to give themselves continually to prayer.

But let all church members be concerned, according to their ability, to edify one another, and earnestly seek the edification of the church of Christ at large. "Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, the churches throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, were edified and multiplied." If we would expect any remarkable revival of religion, we must stir up ourselves to take hold of the Lord, to call upon his name, to put him in remembrance, and plead the accomplishment of his gracious promises. "For this I will be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: I will increase them with men like a flock." When the Lord designs to appear in any remarkable way in behalf of his own work and people, he ordinarily excites them to abound in the duty of prayer, for the plentiful effusion of his Spirit. For to his gracious, powerful, quickening, sanctifying influence, all true revivals of religion are to be ascribed. And to be earnestly concerned for the revival and reformation of religion in the church at large, may be considered as an evidence of the persons so concerned being themselves acquainted with and exercised to religion. In 1 Cor. chap. xvii., the Apostle illustrates the intimate union and communion which church members ought to have, and, in a measure, have with one another, by the beautiful and instructive similitude of the natural body; in which, while every individual member, has its particular, distinct station, office and care, it has also a feeling for, and a care about the rest, and contributes to the beauty, benefit, usefulness and perfection of the whole.—"The members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." It would be unnatural in the members of the body to be indifferent about one another. So they act an unnatural part in the church of Christ, who indulge a selfish, narrow spirit, and have no lively, generous concern for the public interests of religion, the spiritual prosperity and enlargement of the church, through the accomplishment of such promises as these. "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed." "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth." "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." "And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations; and then shall

the end come." "All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee; for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations." How exemplary is Paul's exercise, "my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved." "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity."—"Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up forever."

But if we be really concerned for the building up of Zion, the edification of the church, we will be earnest in prayer, and other means of divine appointment, to have our own souls prospering, to be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.—We will seek to have more and more of the evidence and comfort of being "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." To whom coming as to a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious; we also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever, Amen.

ART. II. *The Discourse of a Minister to himself in a time of trouble.*

[Concluded from page 206.]

THE time of affliction is a time in which a minister has peculiar need to watch very strictly his temper, his tongue, and his heart. It is just as true that all afflictions as well as other things, work together for the *destruction* of the flesh in the Christian, as that they work for the good of the *spirit*. The flesh is fully apprised of this, and therefore meets all afflictions as an irrecoverable enemy, and like any other warrior musters all its forces to oppose the corrections of God. All the plagues of the heart that may have, during prosperity, been quiet and concealed, all the lusts, all the passions, the proud, the vain, the atheistical thoughts that are or ever have been in the man, will come forth like the battallion of an army equipped with all the fury, wrath and malice which is in the magazine of the heart. And the rashness and imprudence, or misapprehensions, or the ill timed speech and cruel surmises, and severe judgments of others is their powerful auxiliary. And if these gain the day woe to the minister himself—the peaceable fruits of affliction will be in an instant destroyed—God will be dishonored, and what the consequence to his future usefulness on the souls of them that are looking on, may be, none on earth and only one in heaven can tell. I say, therefore, he is called to watch at his peril. And to let not a single thought, or emotion be admitted to a *hearing* in the soul, nor a word to pass the lips which cannot give to the sentinel the words, **HUMBLE SUBMISSION.**—While he stands at this post he will have a fine opportunity for discovering what a poor, weak, sinful worm he is! What a terrible hold of sinful thoughts and passions his heart is! What dreadful and unutterable things are there! It is an abyss without a bottom, ever boiling up to its surface new and more horrible forms of wickedness!—Amazing grace of God to make of such a creature a minister of Jesus "to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ!" Marvellous merits of Christ, that makes his services acceptable before the throne of the Most Holy! Great must be the grace given when *he* can preach at all with such a heart within him!

He will find out a great many things that may be of singular use to him all his life after.—That corruption is far stronger, and has done far

more in his doings than *he* had ever supposed—that there are plagues in *his* heart, which he had scarcely thought to be in any heart—that pride in a minister is the most horrible moral deformity, that the mind created can ever conceive—that humility is his most beautiful garment—that his debt to the beloved Jesus, for putting *him* into the ministry calls on him to spend and be spent, as a token of gratitude, but it can never be paid—and therefore, that he is *more* indebted than a private Christian.

It ought to be a minister's care to *justify* God in his trouble. He must know that there *is* a "cause wherefore God contends with him"—a "need be for his heaviness through manifold tribulations." His language before the people should be, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, till he arise and plead my cause, and execute judgment for me,"—his prayer before God should be, "show me wherefore thou contendest with me." "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." His reflections within himself should be, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil." However great and peculiar his troubles may be, it is befitting in him like Aaron "to hold his peace," and to "be dumb, because God did it." What seems mysterious and incomprehensible in his case he should lay to that word, "what thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter," and the future part his life and circumstance, which often go beyond the utmost stretch of human forethought to provide for them, or to calculate at all, he ought to lay on that word, "commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass."

He may learn, in the course of his afflictions a little more acquaintance with the temptations and wiles of satan. That wily serpent knows well how to select his time and opportunity. When the Christian is in trial, and his weakest grace and strongest corruption is brought out to view, then is his time to set on. As he cannot destroy a Christian, his manner with him is different from that which he uses towards those whom he considers his own. His object with him is to *terrify* and distract, and interrupt his comfort and joy. And, if not restrained, he can turn a time of trouble and affliction into a time of terror and dismay.—When the mind is agitated—and busy imagination is keenly alert, he frequently colors out the fatherly corrections, as the "dreadful fierceness of his wrath," as the judge. This is one of his artifices, by which, with the help of the legal spirit and unbelief within, he often succeeds in filling the mind of God's child with "fearful terrors," and shutting out, for a time, the comforts which come even with affliction, when it can be relied on as the doing of a *father*. At such a time sin is called to remembrance as it should be—another of his wiles is to show it to the soul through a magnifying glass, that it may strike the imagination as too great to be pardonable—or, as *the* unpardonable sin itself. And it is not hard to work the mind into a belief of this, if it has been previously led to suppose that God is dealing with us as a judge. And now the conclusion resting on these premises is cast upon the soul like a thunder bolt, you are not a Christian at all! All your professions are and have been hypocrisy! You "have preached the gospel to others it is true, but *you*—are a cast away!—But if this does not take—if the afflicted one on looking over again the grounds of his hope cannot discover it to differ from what the scripture holds out, neither can he charge himself with known and allowed insincerity and hypocrisy in his professions, the serpent immediately alters his course. "Well, you have preached and prayed and done much in religious life, and may be supposed to know as much about it as any other,—What does it all serve you now? You took hold of

the promise, and committed yourself, and family, and affairs unto God. Yet all this misery and destruction is come upon you. Can there be any reality in it? Is it not all a cheat? Suppose that at this moment the Holy Spirit enables the soul to reject with abhorrence the blasphemous suggestion, as alike contrary to scripture and reason; the tempter is still ready with another stratagem to this effect. "How completely you foiled Satan; how patiently you bear trouble; what an example you are to others; few have made your attainments; you are a tried saint; your people must respect you greatly." Vanity would swallow down this in a moment as a sweet morsel, but the still small voice of the new creature enters its protest—"Not I, but Christ that liveth in me." Another of his wiles is to avail himself of constitutional peculiarities, which affliction brings more prominently into action. If the person is constitutionally quick and hasty, this cruel adversary will try by some incident or other to beguile him out of the King's highway, which is, "to wait for God in the way of his judgments," and "with the soul to desire him in the night." Perhaps in some moment of hasty impatience, some false construction on the ways of Providence is hastily thrust into the view of the mind, with a view to its adoption. Or, some hasty, uncharitable conclusion respecting the conduct of men is presented for utterance, which would often act upon a Christian community like a fire-brand in a magazine. Or, some plan for future life, taking the matter out of the hand of a faithful Providence, is under vivid colours hastily presented to the eye. But time would fail to enumerate. By these the soul is tossed like a vessel in a storm; at one time it mounts to heaven, and at another goes down to the depths; it reels and staggers like one drunk, and is at its wits end, and would certainly be swallowed up and go down to everlasting night; but God in mercy will not permit this; he hears its prayer; and his word changes this storm into a calm.

A minister has sometimes, in the course of affliction, opportunity of witnessing, in a very striking manner, the great uncertainty of all things in this life. They go with the setting sun and return with his rising, and change about continually like the wind. And it is most fit that he whose office it is to draw the attention and heart of men to the upper world, and the glory of the Redeemer's eternal kingdom, should have clearly before him the meanness, inadequacy and uncertainty of this as a foil to set it off. Is it not fair that he who, more than others, has professed to forsake all things for Christ and his gospel, should be presented with opportunity to show that it is *more* than profession?

Again, his affliction may explain the meaning of Christ's words, when he says, that he who forsakes all for him "shall have a hundred fold (or such things) in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting."—For, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;" and on such occasions, he sometimes opens the hearts of his people to sympathize with the afflicted, as so many fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, and their purses to pour out a profusion of supply to his necessities, until like Job he has got double what he lost. And truly, besides supplying the lack of the mere temporal, perishing thing, this comes upon the wounded soul like a healing balm. 'Tis the Father's hand wiping off the tear from the cheek of his child. It is the sympathy of the whole body with its suffering member. It powerfully, yet most *directly* reproves the despondency of the soul in its downcasting and darkness, when it comes in upon the back of such doleful sayings as this: "Is't true that to be gracious the Lord forgotten hath, and that his tender mercy he hath shut up in his wrath?"

Affliction may discover to a minister that he hath been mistaken as to his usefulness, and as to the relish that is for his doctrine. It may disco-

ver that it was much greater than he had supposed, and that though he saw it not, the Spirit of God was at work upon hearts, giving them to taste the sweetness and excellency of gospel truth, and enlisting their affections to it, and to all that are the friends of it. This ought to encourage him to go on and not slack his hand under any the most discouraging external appearance of things. For he is a poor judge of the work of God. There may be seven thousand where he thinks there is not one. While others are going far upon the other extreme, even to manifest desolation, counting their many thousand converts, and hopeful, and anxious, when neither the doctrine preached, nor the practice that follows it, taken as a whole, answers to converting work at all, he may, in this dark and cloudy day, possibly go to an extreme of discouragement. But, "though Israel should not be gathered" at all, we must go on in the course of plain duty, casting in the seed, and leaving it in the hand of Him who ordains the seasons, and the appointed weeks of harvest.

A minister ought to study to turn his affliction to good account, in serving his master and edifying the church. He ought to be better qualified to sympathise with the distressed, he ought to know their heart and its inquietude better, and should be stirred up to their relief with all the experimental knowledge which he has thus obtained. His life should be a more edifying example—his converse more heavenly, and his discourses more practical, close and weighty. The dispensations of Providence may and ought to put him on a train of discourses adapted to the occasion, and suited to bring up into his view the duties, the trials and the comfort and deliverance of the afflicted—illustrating the sufficiency and freeness of divine grace—the fitness of the promise for the darkest day of trouble. In this way he, "drawing his bow at a venture," may hit precisely the case of some poor distressed soul, or he may prepare others for the trials into which they are about to enter. And who knows if it was not to qualify him for doing this very thing that his own trials were sent upon him. If his afflictions may scandalize some at religion, they may, through the divine blessing, produce the contrary effect on others, and bring them to a thorough conviction of its superlative excellency.

The people cannot be mere spectators of a minister's afflictions. They and he are too closely connected to admit of this. As well might the foot or the hand pretend to be mere spectators of the troubles of the eyes or the mouth. Can it be of no concern to the flock that its shepherd is in difficulties? It will be readily admitted that it is their bounden duty to offer up prayers in his behalf. The apostle claims this much for ministers at all times. "Brethren pray for us." This much they are bound to do, "one for another," and "for all men;" much more for their minister in trouble. But it is their duty also to see whether their prayers for him have been answered or not. Whether he is supported, comforted, patient, steadfast in faith, giving glory to God, or the contrary.—Surely, besides, that this is a necessary contribution to his strength and encouragement; it is a matter in which their own personal comfort and edification under his ministry is much concerned—to see whether he practices what he has preached to them—to see whether the grace of God is sufficient in him—to see whether their prayers are of any avail before God—whether his ability to deal with them in their trouble be merely a literary acquirement, or christian experience also. This must be found out by private godly converse with him. To see him abroad, or hear him in the pulpit, is no proof. One may laugh when his heart weeps and is disconsolate. He may preach comfort and feel but little. That the private Christian or elder can tell him nothing which he does not already know, and that therefore it is needless for them to essay conversation with him, is not admitted, either premises or conclusion. But

suppose it were, the duty would still remain; for by soliciting *him* to converse with them they could still discover how the matter went with him. In various ways this appointed mean might be blessed to him and to them. While he gives his views to them he thereby receives fresh strength to his own heart. While they drop the well known or common place sentiment, it may come to him with more than common power. But, again, if he stand firm in the trial on the sole word of God, and they see that it bears him up, their duty is to go and do likewise. And if they see him stagger and fall, fret and complain, impotent and unbelieving, they ought to understand that their duty is to follow no man farther than he follows Christ—that principles, not men, is their standard.

In many cases, the strokes inflicted on him are also intended for their reproof and correction. God contends with them also through him. In this case every one has an account of his own that ought to concern him. How does the matter stand? Have they either over-valued or under-valued the servant? Have they profitted by his ministry?—received the instruction given?—submitted to the reproofs and corrections administered? Or are they stationary in religion? Are the same sins still committed—the same duties still neglected?—or, rather, *more* cold, hardened and careless? It is a very important inquiry this, to which they are summoned by a minister's trials. Perhaps it is to warn them that he may soon be removed or rendered incapable of profiting them, or that similar trials are just at *their* own door.

A minister in trouble is sometimes a *sign* to the church. Thus was Isaiah, when he went "naked and barefoot." Thus was Ezekiel, when "the desire of his eyes was taken away with a stroke." In these cases it was a sign of coming judgment, still heavier than all that had preceded it—even captivity and desolation. And the sign may portend destruction still.

From this view of a minister's afflictions, I would infer that "it is very good for him to be afflicted." "Blessed is the man whom the Lord, chastises and teaches him out of his law." It improves his experimental knowledge of the scriptures, and of the power of divine grace, and the riches of divine condescension and love. It makes him to know more of the evil nature of sin in his own heart—more of the wiles of Satan. It makes him more humble, more weaned from sublunary things, more submissive. And it gives him most convincing testimonies of God's faithfulness. And he is bound to "set to his seal that God is true."

Again: it should teach every one, and a minister more especially, to judge more charitably of others. Weakness, confusion, and great perplexity, must doubtless have often, during his trouble, have given to his case and state a forbidding appearance, according to which, had he been judged, his real state would have been misrepresented: which, therefore, instructs him in the necessity of great caution and tenderness in respect to others.

Again: we may see that the proper government of the temper is a great matter in affliction. Without this, though the root of the matter be in him, he may be betrayed continually into some snare or other. Rash steps, sudden conclusions, or haste, should, above all things, be shunned. "In patience he should possess his soul." One hasty step at such a time may put him farther out of his right course than he may be able to regain for years. Doubtless there will be many things said and done in circumstances, at times, or by persons, that will greatly provoke to this very thing. At the very moment of David's deepest distress, Shimei comes out and curses him, and throws stones; but he, instead of hastily giving leave to Abishai to take off "the dead dog's head," looks above and sees that the Lord had bidden him curse David—it was a part

of the appointed affliction—let him curse. And most of all should he beware of rising up suddenly from under his trouble, or allowing its weight suddenly to diminish upon his heart. Very sad may be the consequences of such a step. The hiding of God's countenance—greater hardness and indifferency of heart—and heavier strokes of correction afterward.

Again: inasmuch as the afflictions of a minister are of so vast and extended importance to himself, to the church and to the world, and seeing that his path is beset with so many dangers of miscarriage, and snares on the right hand and on the left, without and within, it much concerns him to "do all to stand," and especially after putting on his whole armor, and doing *all* that in him lies, he ought to "*pray always* with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all *perseverance*." His eye and his heart ought never for a moment to be away from the throne of grace,—that his "foot may be set on an even place," and his steps established steadfastly. "Thy way Lord show, teach me thy paths, lead me in truth, teach me."

Finally, if great spiritual advantages are to be obtained by affliction; if they lift us farther from earth and nearer heaven, the greater humility and watchfulness must be requisite to keep what has been gained. For there is, undoubtedly the greater danger of spiritual pride and security, which surely lays us open to Satan's most fearful temptations of all sorts. It is just like ascending higher up in the air, which makes one more giddy and ready to fall. Above all things, then, humility and watchfulness, with this prayer, "Make strong what thou hast wrought for us, Lord."

ART. III. *Repentance; a Tract, by Rev. Alexander Bullions, D. D., Cambridge, New-York.*

[Concluded from page 215.]

SECT. II.—THE AUTHOR AND SUBJECTS OF GOSPEL REPENTANCE.

God is the author, and sinners, considered as regenerate and believing, the only subjects of repentance unto life. Sinful creatures, if left to themselves, would never repent, even though space was given them for repentance. Satan and his associates in crime have never grieved because of their rebellion against Jehovah. They still love iniquity, and are determined, at the expense of eternal ruin, to persist in its perpetration. Adam, by transgression, lost all the enjoyments of paradise, and exposed himself to endless misery; but instead of repenting, confessing and turning to God, fled from him and hid himself among the trees of the garden. The severest judgments have been inflicted on sinners, and the greatest outward mercies conferred on them, yet they have remained impenitent. And the result cannot possibly be different. For how can a heart filled with hatred against God, relent, mourn for offending him, renounce iniquity, and love righteousness? It is as impossible for a fallen, proud creature to repent, as for the frost of winter to produce vegetation, or for the dead to arise and come forth to life. And no instance can be produced of it. Nearly six thousand years have passed away, and during the whole of that period the annals of truth record not a single example of a sinner, by his own exertions, repenting and obtaining salvation.

Jehovah himself, Father Son and Spirit, is the sole author, the only efficient cause of evangelical repentance. "Then hath God to the Gen-

tiles also granted repentance unto life. If God will peradventure give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born."

Christ, as Mediator, is called to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. As a priest, he has appeased the anger of Jehovah, and opened a way for the return of the guilty to his favor, and thus presents the strongest encouragement to repent. As a prophet, he has revealed the scheme of mercy, and is inviting sinners to consider their ways, and return unto the Lord. As a king, he is proclaiming pardon to the guilty, commanding every rebel to repent and return to his allegiance, and shedding down the Spirit to dispose, and enable transgressors to repent and return to the Lord. He thus opened his personal ministry: "Repent ye and believe the gospel."

The Spirit of the Lord is also intimately concerned in repentance. He is the immediate cause of it, the Father and the Son operating through him. It is his province in the economy of mercy to set the sinner's transgressions before his face in their number, aggravations and deserts, to convince him of his pollution and danger, and reveal unto him the pardoning mercy of God, and the justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ. When he is poured out as the spirit of grace and supplication, and acts as the spirit of grace, convincing the hardened of their sins, enlightening the understanding of the blind, renewing the will of the obstinate, and purifying the affections of the polluted, then the subjects of his work look on Christ, whom they have pierced, and mourn for that piercing with godly sorrow.

Sinners considered as regenerated and believing are the exclusive subjects of evangelical repentance. In innocency Adam was implicated in no crime, and repentance was not his duty. The inhabitants of heaven, though actuated with hatred of all sin and love to holiness, have no consciousness of guilt, no painful feelings for present transgression, so cannot be the subjects of repentance. All men on earth being sinners, repentance is become the imperious duty of all. God commandeth all men, every where, to repent. Paul, proceeding on this divine command, testified both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God. Hence it is called repentance from dead works, sin being its proper object; of these, whether public or private, of omission or commission, of greater or less magnitude, all men are bound to repent, and to turn, in purpose and in reality, to the love and practice of new obedience.

But while it is the duty of all men to repent, and many of them do repent, according to the sorrow of the world, that worketh death, none do repent unto life, but elect and believing sinners. Some transgressors are so hardened in crimes that they are past feeling. Their neck is an iron sinew, and their brow brass. They cannot blush, and they refuse to be ashamed. Others of them live in great thoughtlessness and stupidity, and when any alarming occurrence arouses them, they either delay repentance, till some convenient season, or cherish a momentary regret, terminating in some superficial and transient reformation. This is that legal repentance, found in ungodly, reprobate men, as Cain and Judas, and in many of the elect themselves, previous to any change of heart. In adults this is properly the precursor and preparation for evangelical repentance. The latter is found only in true believers. For there is a looking to Christ with the eye of faith, previous to mourning for him. It is a sight by faith of Christ as crucified, and of God as reconciled, that

produces that kindly sorrow which true penitents feel, and which brings them to Christ. Hence Ephraim saith, "Surely *after* that I was turned I repented, and *after* that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, even confounded, because that I did bear the reproach of my youth."

If this representation be correct, then gospel repentance precedes not, but follows faith. Legal repentance may, and generally, if not uniformly, does precede faith; but gospel repentance proceeds from faith, as its fruit and effect. Indeed, none but believers can have such a sight of sin, of God, of themselves, and of righteousness, as is productive of genuine repentance. And this repentance is indissolubly connected with grace and salvation. It is repentance after a godly sort, not to be repented of, and repentance unto salvation. Every other kind and grade of repentance may be found in the reprobate, but evangelical repentance, as well as faith and salvation, is confined to elect and believing sinners.

SECT. III.—THE MEANS OF REPENTANCE.

The means of repentance are various, and variously contribute to it. The Holy Ghost, though the efficient cause of repentance, does not usually operate in its production immediately, but mediately, through the instrumentality of a system of means. Some of these are occasional, merely exciting and calling the attention of the sinner to himself and salvation. Of this description are the events of Providence, whether prosperous or adverse. The goodness of God, although despised, should lead the transgressor to repentance, by calling his attention to the beneficence and mercy of God, as encouragements to the guilty to repent and expect forgiveness. The ills of life being manifestations of God's displeasure against sin, are admirably calculated to arouse from stupidity and induce serious consideration, and have often produced these effects. It is, indeed, God's usual procedure, to bring into the wilderness, and then and there begin the good work. It was Ephraim's *wounds* that made him bemoan himself. It was *want* that brought the prodigal to himself, and was overruled to produce the disposition and resolution to return to his father's house.

The grand standing and instrumental means of repentance is the word of God, read and preached. The law exhibits to the sinner his vileness and danger, and thus fills him with hatred of sin, and shame and sorrow on account of it, and awakens an earnest desire for deliverance. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." It is the fire to heat and the hammer to break in pieces the flinty heart, and thus to prepare it for the gospel. It produces however nothing, even when applied by the Spirit, but a legal repentance, and separate from the gospel would never fill the heart with the love of God and of holiness, and produce kindly relents for iniquity, because committed against infinite majesty, grace and goodness. To this the gospel is as essential, as the law is necessary to prepare for its operation. It exhibits God as hating sin with a perfect hatred, and determined, as the righteous Governor of the universe, to maintain the honor of his law, but at the same time it reveals him as our gracious Father, giving, from pure love, his Son to die for our salvation. This discovery awakens a new train of feelings; our views of God are entirely changed: we see him to be at once the greatest and best of beings, and cannot forgive ourselves for ever having treated him as we have done. The very thought that he is pacified towards us, notwithstanding of all that we have done, leads us to loathe ourselves, and we cannot forgive ourselves for having sinned against him. We now feel willing to be hired servants in his house, contented to take the lowest place, and count his service freedom, pleasure and honor.

To render any mean effectual for this end, our use of it and the ac-

companying blessing of God, are indispensably necessary. It is in vain to expect a bountiful harvest, unless we cultivate the field, and God give rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons. God hath conjoined both in the institution of the means, and it would be enthusiasm and impiety to put them asunder. The case is exactly the same in religion. Jehovah has ordained, and he blesses a system of means for commencing religion in the heart, and for carrying it on to perfection when begun; and it is absurd to expect the result where these means are neglected; or that the use of them will prove effectual when the co-operating influences of heaven are withheld. If we would then find these divinely instituted means of salvation effectual, we must diligently use them, and fiducially and prayerfully depend on God for the blessing. In particular, in respect of repentance, we should be much in the exercise of self-examination, reading of the scriptures, hearing the gospel preached, meditation and prayer.—The first, second and third of these are admirably calculated to acquaint us with our hearts and ways, our present condition and future prospects. The fourth would affect our souls, and render the knowledge attained by self-examination, reading the scriptures and hearing the gospel, influential. The last would draw down the divine blessing on all the preceding means, and we should find in our happy experience the benefit of crying with Ephraim, “turn thou me, and I shall be turned.”

SEC. IV.—THE SEASON OF REPENTANCE.

There is a time for every purpose under the sun, and every thing is beautiful in its season, and some things have such a particular season that if they are not then done they never can be done. The field that is not sown in season cannot produce a crop in harvest. There is also a season for repentance, in which we may expect the divine blessing to make our use of the prescribed means effectual. “Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation.” “Harden not your heart as in the day of temptation in the wilderness, unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.” “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.” “O Jerusalem, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace: but now they are hid from thine eyes.” These declarations of God inform us that there is a day for doing the work of repentance, and when that day is closed, and the night cometh, it can no more be done forever.

The proper season for repentance is the first moment that ensues on the commission of sin. The moment any sin is committed, that same moment repentance is to be commenced, and while sin continues and is repeated, repentance must also be continued and repeated.

Youth is the most proper period of human life to commence repentance. Early repentance prevents the waste of precious time in sin, the confirmation of vicious habits, and the accumulation of crimes and misery. The farther any travel in sin, if they ever repent, the farther they have to return with weeping and supplication. Wounds that might easily be healed when fresh, can hardly be cured when gangrened. Sins that might have been early and easily crushed in the beginning, like the young of serpents and beasts of prey, when matured require the strength of the giant and the labor of years to destroy them. Then right eyes long endeared have to be plucked out, and right hands cut off. Then a war with the flesh has to commence, and unless prosecuted with energy to victory, we must be often shamefully conquered. Ease, carnal security, and Satan, prompt to defer repentance, but it never can be easier or more profitable than it is at the present moment. For it is as difficult for those that are accustomed to do evil, to repent, as it is for “the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots.”

But while youth is the most proper season for repentance, the season of it in general is not past till death closes the scene. We say "in general," for the sentiment seems countenanced by scripture, that individuals, as well as societies, may so advance in impenitence that their day of grace closes before death arrests them and seals their doom. But be this as it may, the delay of repentance till old age is both foolish and criminal. We read of two that were translated to heaven without tasting death, and of but one that in the course of four thousand years repented unto salvation at the eleventh hour. This holds out a solemn warning, that the probability of repenting late in life is extremely small. And how unseasonable, to have the first and great work of life to commence at the close, when the faculties are enfeebled, and disease and pain are distracting mind and body. How great madness to continue provoking God by delaying repentance when our days are in his hand, and he may cut us off in a moment, and "swear in his wrath that we shall not enter into his rest." And if the language of the Bible give fearful intimation that the day of grace to some is terminated before their natural life ends, the admonition comes in loud and thrilling accents: "Prepare to meet thy God." "To-day if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "For I say unto you, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

SEC. IV.—MOTIVES TO REPENTANCE.

We have the most urgent motives and encouragements to repentance.

1. Till we repent we remain under God's sentence of condemnation, and must perish. Said Christ, and repeated it to assure us of its infallible certainty and importance, "Except ye repent ye shall all perish." We have sinned, and therefore have become obnoxious to the curse. We have sinned times innumerable, and this increases the greatness of our danger. But suppose that we had sinned but once—as one murder is fatal, so one transgression subjects the transgressor to death the penalty of the law. This penalty is denounced against every transgressor of a law that is holy just and good. It contains not one ingredient more than transgression deserves. It is what the judge of all the earth has determined, and when inflicted, every mouth will be stopped from a conviction of its righteousness. It renders the transgressor completely miserable; but this is his just desert. And it will be infallibly inflicted. As the penalty is just, its infliction is certain. "The soul that sinneth shall die." Jehovah the just would act unjustly if he did not inflict it. But he will render to every man according to his works; tribulation and anguish to every soul that sinneth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Nay, without repentance the crime is persisted in, and there can be no holiness here nor happiness hereafter. For till the heart is weaned from sin, it cannot accept of the grace of the gospel, or bow to the supremacy of God in the law, and thus remaining impenitent under the dominion of sin, cannot find admission into heaven, and is utterly unprepared for any of its enjoyments. Life and death, then, are suspended on repentance. Remaining impenitent, we are condemned; repenting, our sins are blotted out, and we ourselves are saved.

This doom, however dreadful, is, obviously and incontrovertibly, most reasonable and righteous. To be satisfied of this, arouse thyself, transgressor, and consider the number of thy sins. They are more than the hairs upon thy head. They are innumerable. "Every imagination of the thoughts of thy heart," God being witness, "is evil only, and that continually." Thy soul abounds with these as the tree with blossoms, and they are all "evil," either being conversant about what is evil, or as the product of a soul destitute of the love of God. Thou sustaineest manifold relations to God and to fellow men, and each gives origin to many

duties, and in all these thou hast sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Art thou in youth or old age, rich or poor, sick or healthy? Each condition has its duties, and hast thou not failed in the acceptable performance of them? How needful and reasonable then is thy repentance, and how dangerous continuance in impenitence? Consider not only the number, but also the aggravations of thy many sins. They have been committed against a law holy, just and good, and clearly announced in scripture. They have been committed against thy Creator, thy bountiful Benefactor, thy indulgent Father, and thy righteous Lord and Judge. And remaining impenitent under such numerous and heinous sins, canst thou escape the righteous judgment of God? Consider also the vile, the petty motives, that have induced thee to commit thy numerous and aggravated offences. It has been to enjoy the momentary gratification of some base appetite or accursed lust. Thou hast for a thing of nought, sold thyself to work iniquity. And ought not this consideration to fill thee with shame and self-loathing? And if not, thy condemnation will be so just, that all the righteous will acquiesce in it, and thy own mouth will be shut when thy doom is pronounced. Consider also the fearful mischief thou hast wrought to compass thy vile gratification. See the havoc thou hast made. Art thou a parent? By thy pernicious maxims and example thou hast taught thy children to travel with thee to hell, and hast been accessory to their ruin. Art thou a child, a brother, a sister, a neighbor? Art thou in a private or public station? Thy transgressions have tended to seduce others from the path of righteousness to sin and ruin. They have deprived thyself of true honor and felicity, involved thee in misery, and exposed thee to eternal destruction. And remaining impenitent, will not this destruction be reasonable, just and inevitable?

2. God is expressly commanding sinners to repent, and delights in pardoning the penitent. It is not left optional with the sinner whether he will repent or remain impenitent. The great God has interposed his authority, and commanded every sinner to repent. "But now God commandeth all men, every where, to repent." This command is proclaimed to thee, O transgressor, by the dispensations of Providence, and by the voice of conscience within thine own bosom. It is also most distinctly announced to thee in the scriptures. Listen and thou shalt hear the voice from heaven, saying, "Repent and believe the gospel." He is sending his servants to preach repentance and the remission of sins. He is reiterating to thee the call, and seconding it by conferring on thee at one time favors, and, at another, by trouble, smiting and again healing. And to encourage thee to comply with this reasonable command he is assuring thee, "that he has exalted Christ Jesus, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and the remission of sin." He is telling thee that he "delights to pardon," and that he pardons without reserve and without upbraiding the returning penitent. He sees him when afar off and afraid to come, goes forth to meet him, falls on his neck, kisses him and kindly receives and liberally entertains him. And wilt thou persist in disobeying the command of heaven and refusing to comply with the entreating voice of mercy offering to thee a full, free, and everlasting pardon? How dreadful the guilt, and how justly will he refuse to hear when thou criest, and laugh when thy calamity cometh? To day, hear his voice, harden not thy heart, lest he "swear in wrath that thou shalt not enter into his rest." "Kiss the son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

3. Repentance is connected with and followed by the richest advantages to the penitent. Repentance is no vain service, but connected with the whole happiness of a sinner. In the constitution of God it has sal-

vation annexed to it. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Jehovah dwells with the true penitent. "But to this man, saith the Lord, will I look even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." It leads to and terminates in true comfort. "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." And well may such rejoice; for they are reconciled unto three dreadful enemies, the justice of God, their own conscience, and to death. The justice of God is the enemy of every impenitent sinner, but it protects the penitent." If we confess our sins he is just and faithful to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity." Conscience, when awakened, not only threatens, but wounds, piercing the vitals and destroying all peace. The believing penitent enters into peace. Death is the king of terrors to the sinner going on in sin, but to the pardoned penitent death is divested of its terrors, and he can thus triumph over it. "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" In short it opens, though not meritoriously, but by the gracious constitution of God, the gates of paradise for the reception of the penitent. Not a genuine penitent was ever rejected by him that delights in mercy, and not one of them misses heaven. They believe and are saved.

Is repentance, then, accompanied and followed by the richest advantages? Let us make sure that our repentance is genuine. Let no repentance satisfy us which is not full, sincere, prompt, constant and scriptural. Let us test its genuineness by its fruits. Paul thus enumerates these, and let us try our repentance by them. 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this self-same thing that ye sorrowed, after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge."

4. Many transgressors have repented and have been pardoned and saved. The Lord God, merciful and gracious, has already pardoned many guilty criminals, taken them into his favor and admitted them to heaven itself. Some of these have been most atrocious criminals. Manasseh, who made the streets of Jerusalem to run with innocent blood, was pardoned by him that sent his son to save the chief of sinners.—Paul, that breathed out slaughter against the church of Christ was pardoned by him that blotteth out iniquities like a cloud, and transgressions as a thick cloud. Pardon was offered to the very crucifiers of the Lord of glory, and they were called to repentance. Let none then despair. Obey the divine and gracious call. Isa. i. 16—20. "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

ART. IV. *Prophetic Times.*

No Commentator on the REVELATION, has displayed more acumen of genius, and none has obtained a more numerous host of followers, than the learned and celebrated JOSEPH MEDE. The principal feature of the

plan, upon which he conducts his exposition, consists in the use of **SYNCHRONISMS**. He saves himself the labor, and his reader the tedium, of examining verse by verse the sublime and mysterious **APOCALYPSE**, and of collecting in detail the result of each process, before any definite idea can be formed of the entire map of this wide-spread survey and long-extended series of human and of divine transactions. He lays hold at once of all the passages, whether in the beginning, the middle, or the end of the book, which in his judgment refer to events coincident in respect of time, and *synchronizes* them—proves their coincidence from characters legible on the face of the prophecy itself. His next object is to show the connecting points between the different clusters of prophecies thus formed by synchronism. The plan adopted by **MEDE** is certainly an admirable one. And it appears strange that so many commentators, who almost implicitly receive his sentiments, have never thought of observing the same process in transmitting them to their readers. But while we cheerfully accord to the learned English Divine the honor of inventing a method, which excels in perspicuity and facility, the accuracy of several of his synchronisms may very safely be disputed. And to me it appears that the incomparable **VITRINGA**, of the **REFORMED CHURCH OF HOLLAND**, in his **ANACRISIS APOCALYPSEOS**, as far surpasses all other commentators in correctness of interpretation, as the ideas which he derives from several of the prophetic symbols exceed theirs in magnitude and grandeur. For example, he not only synchronizes the seven epistles to the churches of Asia with the seven seals of the book opened by the Lamb, which epistles most expositors throw out of the Revelation, by refusing them a prophetic sense: he likewise discovers in the six first seals a train of events, which are visible, tangible, comprising all the great changes that have affected the church of God upon the one hand, and imperial Rome, both in her Pagan, and Antichristian forms upon the other, and that for a lapse of many ages—a train of events, the history of which already astounds mankind—while the catastrophe of the great drama is yet future, and will one day, not far distant, cause the ears of one class of men to tingle, and the mouths of the other to reiterate loud hallelujahs. Then follows the long-protracted silence, or rest, of the seventh seal, which constitutes the Millennium. How pitiful, compared with this, is the deceptious advantage gained by the church in the victory of Constantine!

But the principle of synchronizing is susceptible of a more extended application, and a more enlarged prospect is desirable, of the times signified by the Spirit speaking in the prophets, than has been given it by the above named ingenious inventor, than has been exhibited in the **ANACRISIS** of Vitranga. The prophecies of the Old Testament ought to be measured and compared with those of the New. The precise time occupied by the fulfillment of each, ought not only to be shown in detail—the connection of all the parts of prophetic revelation ought to be distinctly marked, so as to turn the prophecies into one compact body of Bible History. Bishop **NEWTON**, in his excellent **DISSERTATIONS ON THE PROPHECIES**, has contributed greatly to the promotion of this desirable end. But some important prophecies of the Old Testament, the fulfillment of which it is necessary to consider, in forming one unbroken chain of prophetic events, are by him entirely omitted. In one word, that writer, who invites his reader to follow him as his guide, in traversing and surveying, acre by acre, and yard by yard, the vast field delineated in the roll of divine revelation, when unfurled to its utmost dimensions, will do such reader a kindness at least, if not discharge an incumbent duty, by previously presenting him, through means of a chronological chart, with a bird's-eye view of the whole landscape. All further de-

scription of particular sections of territory will, by this method, be rendered more concise and intelligible—less laborious to the expositor—more satisfactory and pleasing to the reader. Such is the design, however imperfect the execution, of the following SCHEME OF PROPHETIC TIMES :

B. C. 3999. The creation. This era is known by computing from the deluge 1656 years—the aggregate of the lives, which the antediluvian patriarchs lived, each before the birth of his son and successor.—To Shem assign 100 years, which he lived before the flood. To Noah 500, before the birth of Shem. Lamech 182, Methuselah 87, Enoch 65, Jared 162, Mahaleel 65, Cainan 70, Enosh 90, Seth 105, Adam 130. In all 1656.

B. C. 2343. The universal deluge. Formed by computing from the call of Abraham 422 years—the aggregate of the post diluvian patriarchs' lives, which each lived before the birth of his son. Assign to Terah before the egress from Ur of the Chaldees 200 years, Nahor 29, Serug 30, Reu 32, Peleg 30, Eber 34, Selah 30, Arphaxad 35, Shem 2 years, between the birth of Arphaxad and the beginning of the flood.—In all 422.

B. C. 1921. The call and egress of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees. Formed by computing from the exit from Egypt, 430 years, Ex. xii. 40, Gal. iii. 17, compare Gen. xii 1.

B. C. 1916. Departure of Abraham from Haran of Mesopotamia. Found by computing from the birth of Isaac, 25 years. For Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran and 100 at Isaac's birth. Gen. xii. 4, and xxi. 5.

B. C. 1891. The birth of Isaac. Found by computing from the exit out of Egypt 400 years, according to Gen. xv. 13. Acts vii. 6.

B. C. 1491. Exit from Egypt upon the night of the first passover. Computed from the founding of the temple in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, 480 years. 1 Kings vi. 1. This number may be collected from the book of Judges, by computing the times allotted to each, and by adding the several terms that preceded or followed between the exit and founding, thus : Peregrination in the desert 40 years. Joshua and the elders 18, Othniel 40, Ehud 80, Deborah 40, Gideon 40, Abimelech 3, Tolah 23, Jair 22, Jephthah 6, Jbzan 7, Elon 10, Abdon 8, Sampson 20, Eli 40, Samuel and Saul 40, David 40, Solomon 3. In all 480. The term of each judge is to be reckoned from the death of his immediate predecessor, so as to include the intervening time of servitude. And the 450 years mentioned in Acts xiii. 20, are to be understood as they are given—not in the exactness of a chronological writer, as in 1 Kings vi. 1,—but in the latitude of style allowed to an extempore speaker—*about* 450 years, including all the chronological terms of the judges. The exact sum of which is 437 years.

B. C. 1054. David reigned in Hebron.

B. C. 1044. Location of the Ark in Zion. Compute 3 years in addition to the reign in Hebron. for the Philistine wars, and one ineffectual effort to bring up the Ark. From this location commence the 390 days of the sin of Israel. Ezek. iv. 5. The Mount Zion continued by divine appointment to be held sacred till the *abomination of desolation* was set up by Titus the Roman, in A. D. 68—a period in all of 1111 years.

B. C. 1014. Solomon reigns.

B. C. 1011. The founding of the temple in the fourth year of Solomon's reign in the month Zif.

B. C. 1004. The dedication of the first temple, after 7 years spent in building. From this dedication till the Reformation by Luther, in A. D. 1517 is precisely one great PROPHETIC WEEK—a week of years—amounting to 2520 years.

B. C. 974. The separation of the tribes, in the first year of the reign of Rehoboam. Found by computing 388 years from the destruction of Jerusalem in the eleventh of Zedekiah, or 370 from the begun captivity in the fourth of Jehoiachin. Assign to Zedekiah 10 years, Jehoiachin 3 months, Jehoiachin, after the begun captivity, 8 years. The same, before the captivity, 3. Jehoahaz 3 months, Josiah 31 years, Amon 2, Manasseh 55, Hezekiah 29. Ahaz 16, Jotham 16, Uzziah 52, Amaziah 29, Joash 40, Athaliah 6, Ahaziah 1, Joram 4, Jehoshaphat 25, Asa 41, Abijah 3, Rehoboam 17. Amounting in all to 388 years. The odd months are omitted, to supply the supposable defect in the last year of some of the reigns.

B. C. 719. The siege of Samaria by Salmanezer begins, in the seventh of the reign of Hosheah king of Israel, and the fourth of Hezekiah king of Judah. This siege being a blow at "*the head of Ephraim*" commences the 65 years *breaking* foretold by the Prophet. Isa. vii. 81.

B. C. 709. Revolt of the Medes, and reign of Dejoces, which commence the dismemberment and fall of the Assyrian empire. Computed from the death of Cyrus, according to HERODOTUS, 180 years. Cyrus was king of Persia and Media 30 years, the last 5 of which only he was emperor of the whole ancient Assyrian and Babylonian dominions. Astyages of Media 35 years, Cyaxares 40, Phraortes 22, Dejoces 53.—This revolt accordingly took place in the fourteenth of Hezekiah king of Judah, when Senacherib's army, warring against Libnah, and menacing Jerusalem, was destroyed by an angel. Isa. xxxvi. and xxxvii. chapters.

B. C. 694. Manasseh's reign, with which commence the 40 prophetic days of the sin of Judah. Ezekiel, iv. 6, and 2 Kings, xxiv. 3, 4.

B. C. 654. THE PROSTRATION. Ephraim is broken, or (consternatus, humi dejectus est) cast upon the ground from being a people, Manasseh is carried captive in the forty-first of his reign. Here terminate, in one point, the 390 days iniquity of the house of Israel, the 65 years breaking of Ephraim, and the 40 days iniquity of the house of Judah. This prostration being effected by Essarhaddon, who is called the king of Assur and of Assyria. Ezr. iv. 2, and 2 Kings xvii. 24, and who must have reigned at Babylon, may be considered as commencing the era of the Babylonian empire—the first of the four great IMPERIAL BEASTS. Daniel vii. 3. From that day till the end of the reign of the APOCALYPTIC BEAST, which is Antichrist, the church of God, which has been reserved from absolute prostration, continues in *subjection*, alternately persecuted and corrupted by the successful powers which have swayed the imperial sceptre. This reign and prostration are commensurate and coincident in respect of time—commenced with the forty-first of Manasseh—comprehend a period of one great prophetic WEEK, SEVEN TIMES, ONE WEEK OF YEARS OF YEARS, 2520 years—the half of this WEEK had elapsed in A. D. 606 ending—the whole will be completed in A. D. 1866, which terminates the reign of Antichrist, the last of the IMPERIAL BEASTS. Lev. xxvi. 28. Daniel iv. 6, 17, and 26. It is not necessary that the Esarhaddon mentioned by Ezra, who is the Assardinas of Babylon in profane history be the same as Esarhaddon the son of Senacherib of Ninevah. This last may be the same as Sardanapalus of profane history. At the vision of the SEVEN TIMES, Daniel sat *astounded one hour*.

B. C. 620. An eclipse of the moon noticed at Babylon, from the calculation of which Ptolemy has corrected the ancient chronology.

B. C. 604. The captivity of the Jews in Babylon, commences in the first year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and fourth of Jehoiachin.—According to the prophecy of Jeremiah, and the history of Ezra, it includes a week of ten years, ending in the edict of Cyrus. Jer. xxv. 11; Ezra, i. 1.

B. C. 586. The destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple, in the nineteenth of Nebuchadnezzar, and eleventh of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. Jer. lii. 5, 12. Here commences a second week of tens, contemplated in the same prophecy with the former, Zech. i. 12, and ending in the dedication of the second temple.

B. C. 536. The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus. Isa. xlv. 1. Belshazzar is slain, and Cyrus' relation, and confederate Cyaxares, that is, Darius the Mede—succeeds to the throne of empire.

B. C. 534. The edict of Cyrus in the first of his reign. The release of the Jews from captivity. The reign of the RAM begins. Cyrus, the greater of the two horns. Median and Persian came up last. Dan. viii. 3. Here ends the first week of tens, embraced in Jeremiah's prophecy.

Here commences, with the imperial reign of the RAM, the 2400 prophetic days, according to the Septuagint reading, which end with the reign of the Little Horn, that is, Antichrist, in A. D. 1866. The Babylonian empire, or LION, lasted 120 years, 4 prophetic months, leaving the above number of days, that is 6 years and 8 months of the great WEEK, for the three remaining Beasts.

B. C. 522. Another eclipse of the moon, remarkable for its use in chronology. Ptolemy of Pelusium, in Egypt, born about A. D. 90, an eminent mathematician, and also a Christian, has calculated the precise times of two remarkable eclipses, which had been observed and recorded by the Chaldean astronomers at Babylon. One of these was recorded as happening in the fifth year of the reign of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar the Great. The historians assign to him a reign of 21 years. The other in the seventh of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus the Great. By the unerring rules of astronomy, the lapse of years between these two celestial phenomena, is found to be 98: the first to have happened in the year of Nabonazar 127, which is J. P. 4093, B. C. 621; the other in the year of Nabonazar 225, which is J. P. 4191, B. C. 523.

B. C. 516. The dedication of the second temple, in the 6th year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes, ends the second week of tens. To Nebuchadnezzar, according to history, both sacred and profane, assign 43 years. Evilmerodach reigned two full years, Neriglissar four, and Laborasorarchad some months, according to Berosus, in Josephus. Assign to the three last reigns in all 8 years; to Belshazzar 17; Darius the Mede 2; amounting to 70 in all. Cyrus lived and reigned, according to Xenophon, 7 years from the conquest of Babylon, consequently only 5 from the commencement of the Medio-Persian empire, which is the first year of Cyrus, in the reckoning of the sacred writers. The erroneous opinion, that Xenophon numbers his 7 years of Cyrus' reign from the death of Darius or Cyaxares, and that the first of those seven corresponds to the first year of Cyrus in scripture, has exceedingly disturbed the whole system of Bible chronology; and is, until removed, an insuperable obstacle to the correct interpretation of the prophecies, both of the Old Testament and the New. Cambyses was Cyrus' son and successor, and reigned 7 years. Smerdis the Magician, 8 months. These two are called Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes in scripture. Ezra iv. 6, 7. Assign to them together 8 years; add 5 years of Darius Hystaspes, which he reigned prior to the dedication, and it makes 18 years in all, from the edict of Cyrus, and 70 from the destruction of the city and the temple by Nebuchadnezzar.

B. C. 458. The decree to restore and to build Jerusalem, in the 7th year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. Ezra vii. 1—26. Here commence the 70 weeks' vision, relating to the advent and work of Messiah, to be terminated and sealed up in his death. Dan. ix. 24. Darius Hystaspes reigned 36 years; but only 31 after the dedication of the temple.—Xerxes the Great, who is the Ahasuerus in the book of Esther, reigned

21 years. Artaxerxes Longimanus, before the decree to restore and build, 6 years. Amounting to 58 in all. The high-priest at the time of this decree was Eliashib, the same as Jozabad. He was the son of Joiakim, and grandson of Jeshua, the contemporary with Zerubbabel. This decree was not made by Artaxerxes Mnemon, nor by any later person of that name. For the grandson of Jeshua could not, in that case, be supposed to be living at the date of the decree. Neh. xii. 10. Ezra viii. 33. Neh. iii. 1.

B. C. 445. Nehemiah made Satrap of Judah, in the 20th of Artaxerxes Longimanus. Neh. ii. 1.

B. C. 409. End of the 7 weeks building of the street and wall; that is, of the policy and order of the body ecclesiastic and of the nation. Beginning of the 62 weeks.

B. C. 1. One year before the vulgar era, Christ is born, about the time of the autumnal equinox. Found by computing from the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius, 27 years, and allotting to Tiberius 2 years co-partnership with Augustus in the empire, according to Velleius, Paternus and Suetonius.

A. D. 20. MESSIAH THE PRINCE. End of the 7 weeks and 62 weeks. Beginning of the kingdom of heaven in the baptism of John, 483 years from the decree, about the time of the vernal equinox.

A. D. 29. Christ is baptised, and enters upon his public ministry, three and a half years from the commencement of his kingdom, about the time of the autumnal equinox, and about 30 full years from his birth.

A. D. 33. Christ is crucified about the time of the vernal equinox, thirty-three and a half years of age, three and a half from his entrance on the ministry, and seven full years from the commencement of the principedom, kingdom, or reign, in the ministry of John. Thus *he confirmed the covenant with many for one week*. And here end the 70 weeks of years. *The midst of the week* (*Heb.* the half of a week) here begins.

A. D. 68. The abomination of desolation is set up; Jerusalem is compassed with armies; the daily sacrifice and oblation cease. These events happened one half week of tens of years after the crucifixion of Christ, and the completion of the seventy weeks of years. Dan. iv. 27. Mat. xxiv. 15. Luke xxi. 20. This is the year in which Nero dies, and Galba succeeds him. He and Otho and Vitellus reign in succession a year and more in all. *Josephus* l. 4. ch. 9.

A. D. 70. Jerusalem and the temple destroyed by Titus and the Romans, about the time of the passover, which is near the vernal equinox.

A. D. 97. The Revelation received and written by John in Patmos.

The FIRST SEAL commences with the reign of Nerva, and extends 154 years; but if from the baptism of John, it embraces a period of 225 years. The *conquering* period; the *Ephesian* state of the church; labor and patience; trial and condemnation of lying apostles; decline of first love; hatred of Nicolaitans; Michael's war with the dragon after the woman's parturition with the man child.

A. D. 251. The SECOND SEAL commences with the reign of Decius, and continues 62 years. The *persecuting* period; the Smyrnan state of the church; blasphemy of the synagogue of Satan; imprisonment; tribulation ten days. Thus the Dragon, at this era cast to the earth, persecutes the woman.

A. D. 257. Flight of the woman into the wilderness begins with the Valerian persecution, which is the last but one of the ten persecutions, called *general*. Here is the first era of the *treading under foot* of the outer court by the Gentiles, and of the two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. Hence to the Reformation by Luther is precisely 1260 prophetic days.

A. D. 303. The FLOOD emitted from the mouth of the Dragon, which is the tenth and Dioclesian persecution; the tribulation of ten prophetic days; the yawning earth swallowed up this flood; the convulsions of the empire, by intestine wars, resulting in the victory and sole command of Constantine, ended the persecution.

A. D. 313. The THIRD SEAL commences with the reign of Constantine the Great. The *famishing* period; continues 294 years; the *Pergamean* state of the church; holding fast Christ's name; Antipas slain; Satan's seat; Balaamites and Nicolaitans tolerated; Pelagianism, Arianism, and many gross superstitions prevail. But exact trial of fundamental doctrines made in ecclesiastic councils, as if by weight and measure.

A. D. 325. The council of Nice, which had been preceded by that of Eliberus, Arelat, Ancyra, and Neocesarea; and is followed by those of Laodicea, Sardica and others, in all which many important points of doctrine are stated and vindicated, and many foolish and superstitious ceremonies are intruded, or regulated and enjoined, by ecclesiastic canons. The hierarchy greatly swells itself in magnitude and power. Images begin to be introduced.

A. D. 606. This year *ending*. The FOURTH SEAL commences with the reign of the *seven headed and ten horned BEAST*. Phocas, the emperor of Constantinople, being the seventh head of the Dragon, and also of this BEAST, proclaims, by imperial edict, Boniface III. UNIVERSAL BISHOP. Thus the Dragon gives the Beast his seat, (which is Rome,) and his power and great authority. The Roman emperor had always been, till this date, the chief Pontiff of the established religion.

This same year Mahomet retires to his cave to digest his Koran, which he gives to light, and begins his conquests A. D. 622. This is the Thyatyrans state of the church; the *mortal* and *hell-like* period; charity, and service, and faith, and patience of the witnesses; woman Jezebel the seductrix; fornication and idols; *kill with death*. This seal extends to a period of about 560 years.

A. D. 1177. The FIFTH SEAL commences here—if not ten years sooner—with the persecution of the Waldenses. Pope Alexander III and Frederick Blue-beard, the emperor, make peace. The latter, prostrating himself to kiss the foot of the former, receives the kiss of peace in return. Thus says *Sigonius*. According to others, the Pope presses his feet upon the emperor's neck, repeating the words of Ps. xci. 13.

The third Lateran council is called this year, by Alexander, consisting of three hundred bishops and a great number of abbots. Canon 1, ordains the election of Pope by cardinals only. Canon 2, anathematizes the Waldenses under the name of *Cathari*. Canon 3, condemns the marriage of the clergy under the name of *concubinage*.

This is the crying period; thy Sardine state; white robes walk in white; "*their brethren also he killed*." Continuation of this seal, if it began A. D. 1167, will be precisely one centennial week.

A. D. 1215. The fourth Lateran council, consisting of 412 bishops, 71 archbishops, Innocent III presiding. Here is confirmed by solemn decree transubstantiation, auricular confession, and *papal omnipotence*. Here is instituted the military order of *crusaders*—avowedly against the Saracens—really against the Waldenses.

A. D. 1517. The Reformation begins by Luther's preaching against indulgences, and his publicly burning the Pope's bull. This ends the 1260 days of the woman's flight, and of the witnesses' prophesying. It ends *one* period of 42 months' treading under foot.

The killing of the witnesses here begins, from which era till their resurrection will be one half week of centuries—three and a half great prophetic days. During this period, that is the latter part of it, the dead

bodies of the martyrs are lying unburied in the street of the great city. Persecution has literally destroyed the Protestant churches in Germany and France, and left nothing comparatively but nominal professors in their room.

A. D. 1866, *ending*. The SIXTH SEAL. The *wrathful* period. The Philadelphian and Laodicean states of the church commence at the same time by SECESSIONS. The former has an *open door*, and will be kept in the hour of temptation, become universal, and continue to the end of the world. The other is lukewarm, nauseous, will be *spued out*, unchurched. Here ends the reign of the Beast, of the Little Horn, the SEVEN TIMES.

A. D. 1942. The MILLENIUM.

J. A.

ART. V. Letter from Scotland.

The Associate Church in this country has been greatly blamed for declining the communion of the United Session Church of Scotland, and also for *not* declining communion with the Original Seceders; because, as is alledged, some in the latter body are advocates for "church establishments." The subjoined letter will show this allegation to be true of the United Church; so that in this particular the two bodies are on a par. But the reasons which have induced the Associate Church to prefer one body to the other, draw deeper, and are vastly more important than any considerations of a political character. With the peculiar political relations of Presbyterian bodies in Scotland to the government of their country, we in this country have no direct concern. The peculiar and diversified views of civil establishment's entertained by individuals in all the branches of the Presbyterian church in Scotland, should not be used as an argument either for or against them, by any in this country possessing common candor. Because it is an extremely nice point to settle; because its settlement belongs to them; and because there are powerful considerations bearing upon it, which have no existence in this country. That country in its national character is under solemn *covenant* engagements to God to profess and maintain the true Reformed religion; not so here. The government of that country has all along extended its aid to religion, from which it may be inferred that if its aid is now to be withdrawn from the Reformed religion, it will be bestowed upon its opposite—Popery; not so here. These peculiar differences might be extended; but enough has been advanced to show that the question of civil establishments, in Scotland is one thing, and in this country quite another. Not that we suppose *principles* capable of change. But in order to overthrow the existing constitution in Scotland, it would be necessary to prove, not merely the sinfulness of its details, but also of its subject matter, which would present the strange anomaly of the church, in a period of signal reformation, covenanting to maintain a sinful constitution. But in this country the question assumes a different shape. Here, it has been settled, by Seceders and others, that the magistrate is bound to countenance and *protect* religion. In what respects and to what extent this countenance is to be given, are questions, which have not been definitively settled, only that it shall not be to the injury of the civil rights of others. We conclude, therefore, that their views of the magistrate's power *circa sacra*, should not be used either for or against our brethren in Scotland. Nevertheless, it must be confessed with sorrow, that there is an evil spirit at work in the Protestant churches both of Britain and America. It has become quite fashionable for professing Christians to compliment corrupt and corrupting governments, for their freedom from religious obligations, and to flatter them for their indifference to the moral character of those over whom God in his Providence has given them authority, for this specific purpose, that they should be "a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well." It is notorious that our civil rulers manifest the greatest unconcern whether the people become Protestants, Papists, Turks, or Pagans; and in this, their hands are strengthened by professed Christians, who use language on this subject which, a century ago, could only be heard from the lips of avowed infidels. And if liberty of conscience should not be wrested from the visible church by the civil arm, it will not be owing in any degree to her exertions to prevent so fearful a calamity. Why so much sensitiveness in the Christian church, lest civil rulers should acknowledge their obligation to, and dependence upon, the Divine Being? Who that has any discernment of the times does not see that "that zeal which influenced our forefathers for the truth," and which inflicted a wound upon the "man of sin" from which he has not yet recovered, "has in a great measure forsaken our land?"

From such considerations as the above we are not prepared to say that either the writer of the subjoined letter, or those, who it is supposed think with him, among Original Seceders, are wrong. So far as can be judged, at this distance, of the present controversy in Scotland respecting civil establishments, it appears that *Protestants* are struggling to break down every barrier erected by their reforming ancestors against the papal see! And we should not be surprised if they were again made to feel the fury of that prophetic beast; nor yet should we be surprised to see his bloody sceptre swayed over this fair republic. The affairs both in church and state, are so obviously shaping to give him an unobstructed reception, that nothing but the special interposition of a merciful God can preserve us from the fangs of the monster.

MR. EDITOR:—I send you the following extract from a letter, dated March 23, 1833, received from a friend in Scotland, belonging to the *United Secession Church*. If you judge it worthy of a place in the Monitor, it is at your service. R.

"Mr. Thomas Charters, son of the late Thomas Charters, Berwick, whom perhaps you will recollect, is present Mayor of Berwick. What a change of times, that a Seceder should be a Mayor! He still attends our meeting, and adheres to his profession! The abolition of the *test*, which took place lately, is of advantage to those who could not conscientiously take it. The emancipation of the Catholics, opened the way for them into parliament: and at our last election, a number of that persuasion were returned for Ireland. What the result may be, time only can determine. The Catholics will never be satisfied till they get all the power into their own hands: and get Ireland into their own hands. May the time soon come when the cry shall be heard, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and shall no more arise.' May the Lord hasten this in his time. In many places in England, and even in Scotland, the number of Papists is greatly on the increase! That zeal which influenced our forefathers for the truth has in a great measure, forsaken our land,—of late, there has been a great cry raised against church establishments of every kind, Presbyterian, as well as Episcopalian. And voluntary Church associations have been formed in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and various other places, and Seceders have taken a prominent place in them. What would Culfargie,* the Erskines, and the other fathers of the Secession, have said to this! Their advocates endeavor to bring strong arguments in favor of their scheme, from your side of the Atlantic, and extol the present state of religion with you, which they in a great measure, impute to the want of establishments. What is your opinion on this subject? I am afraid, that if we had no Parish Churches, whole districts, even in our beloved land, would be destitute of the very form of religion. Let patronage be abolished, and let the pure doctrines of the gospel be preached, and there can no evil arise from a moderate stipend being raised from the land.

ART. VI. *Correspondence between the Lords and Commons in the Parliament in England, and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; also between said Assembly and the Assembly of Divines met at Westminster, 1643—1648.*

It is believed that the following correspondence will be read with interest by all who have it not in their possession. It will give some insight into the faithful contentions of our christian fathers, and should it lead any to greater watchfulness in this respect, its publication will not be in vain.

A Declaration of the Lords and Commons in the Parliament of England, to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The Lords and Commons in Parliament, acknowledging with humble thankfulness to Almighty God, the disposer of hearts, the christian zeal and love which the General Assembly of the Churches of Scotland, have manifested in their pious endeavors for the preservation of the true Reformed Protestant religion, from the subtle practice and attempts of the Popish and prelatical party, to the necessary reformation of church discipline and government in this kingdom, and the more near union of both churches, do earnestly desire that reverend Assembly to take notice, that the two Houses of Parliament, fully concurring with them in these pious intentions, for the better accomplishment thereof, have called an assembly of divers godly and learned divines, and others of this kingdom, unto the city of Westminster, who are now sitting and consulting about these matters. And likewise have nominated and appointed John, earl of Ruthland, Sir William Armine, baronet, Sir Henry Vane the younger, knight, Thomas Hatcher and Henry Darley, esquires, committees and commissioners of both Houses, to the kingdom and states of Scotland; who, besides their instructions in matters concerning the peace and commonweal of both kingdoms, have received directions to resort to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and propound and consult with them, or any commissioners deputed by them, in all occasions which may further the so much desired reformation in ecclesiastical matters in this church and kingdom, and a nearer conjunction betwixt both churches. In performance whereof, Mr. Stephen Marshal, and Mr. Philip Nye, ministers of God's Word, and men of approved faithfulness and abilities in their function, both members of this Assembly of divines here congregated and sitting, are appointed to assist and advise the same committee in such things as shall concern this church. And the two Houses do hereby recommend the committees and divines aforementioned, to the reverend Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to be by them received with favor, and credited in those things which they, or any three or more of them, shall propound to them.

It is likewise desired, that that reverend Assembly will, according to their former promise and resolution, send to the Assembly here, such number of godly and learned divines, as in their wisdom they think most expedient for the furtherance of this work, which so much concerns the honor of God, the prosperity and peace of the two Churches of England and Scotland; and which must needs have a great influence in procuring a more safe and prosperous condition to other reformed churches abroad. And that their endeavors may be more effectual, the two Houses do make this request to them, with their authority, advice and exhortation, so far as belongs to them, to stir up that nation to send some competent forces in aid of

* Rev. A. Moncrief.

this Parliament and kingdom, against the many armies of the Popish and Prelatical party, and their adherents, now in arms for the ruin and destruction of the Reformed religion, and all the professors thereof. In all which they shall do that which will be pleasing to God, whose cause it is, and likewise safe and advantageous to their own church and kingdom, who cannot securely enjoy the great blessings of religion, peace and liberty in that kingdom, if this church and kingdom, by the prevailing violence of that party, shall be brought to ruin and destruction.

J. BROWNE, *Cleric. Parliamentorum.*

HENRY ELSYNGE, *Chr. Com.*

The Answer of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to the Declaration of the Honorable Houses of the Parliament of England.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, having received a Declaration from the honorable Houses of the Parliament of England, by their committees and commissioners now residing here, have thought good to make known unto the Lords and Commons in Parliament, that all the members of this Assembly, and others well affected here, do with most thankful respects, take special notice of the expressions which they have been pleased to make in the aforementioned Declaration, not only concerning their approbation of the desires and endeavors of the General Assembly of this Kirk, for the reformation of the Church of England, and the union of both churches in religion and church government; but also concerning the resolution of both Houses, fully to concur with them in these pious intentions. With the same thankfulness and due reverence, they acknowledge the high respects expressed towards them by both Houses, in directing unto them their committees and commissioners, assisted by two reverend divines, and in desiring some of the godly and learned of this Kirk to be sent unto the Assembly sitting there.

The Assembly doth bless the Lord, who hath not only inspired the Houses of Parliament with desires and resolutions of the reformation of religion, but hath advanced by several steps and degrees that blessed work; by which, as they shall most approve themselves to the Reformed churches abroad, and to their brethren of Scotland, so shall they most powerfully draw even from heaven the blessings of prosperity and peace upon England. And as it is the earnest wish of their brethren here, that the true state and ground of the present differences and controversies in England, may be more and more cleared, to be concerning religion, and that both Houses may unceasingly prosecute that good work first and above all other matters, giving no sleep to their eyes, nor slumber to their eyelids, until they find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob, whose favor alone can make their mountain strong, and whose presence in his own ordinances shall be their glory in the midst of them. So it is our confidence, that the begun reformation is of God, and not of man; that it shall increase and not decrease; and that he to whom nothing is too hard, who can make mountains, valleys, crooked things straight, and rough ways smooth, shall lead along and make perfect this most wonderful work, which shall be remembered to his glory in the church, throughout all generations.

And lest, through any defect on the General Assembly's part, the work of reformation, (which hitherto, to the great grief of all the godly, hath moved so slowly,) should be any more retarded or interrupted, they have, according to the renewed desires of both Houses of Parliament, and their own former promises, nominated and elected Messrs. Alexander Henderson, Robert Douglas, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Balzie, and George Gillespie, ministers of God's Word; and John, Earl of Cassils, John, Lord Maitland, and Sir Archibald Johnston, of Waristoun, ruling elders, all of them men much approved here; with commission and power to them, or any three of them, whereof two shall be ministers, to repair unto the Assembly of Divines, and others of the Church of England, now sitting at Westminster, to propound, consult, treat, and conclude with them, and with any committees deputed by the Houses of Parliament, (if it shall seem good to the honorable Houses in their wisdom to depute any for that end,) in all such things as may conduce to the utter extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, heresy, schism, superstition and idolatry; and for the settling of the so much desired union of this whole Island in one form of church government, one confession of faith, one common catechism, and one directory for the worship of God, according to the instructions which they have received, or shall receive from the commissioners of the General Assembly, appointed to meet at Edinburgh from time to time, with the Assembly's power for that end. And as the General Assembly doth most gladly and affectionately receive and fully trust the committees and divines sent hither, so do they hereby commend the aforementioned commissioners, not only to the like affection and trust of the Assembly there, but also to the favor and protection of both Houses of Parliament.

And for the further satisfaction and encouragement of their brethren of England, the whole Assembly, in their own name, and in the name of all the particular churches in this kingdom, whom they represent, do hereby declare, that from their zeal to the glory of God, and the propagation of the gospel, from their affection to the happiness of their native king, and of the kingdom of England, and from the sense of their own interest in the common dangers of religion, peace and liberty, they are most willing and ready to be united and associated with their brethren in a nearer league and solemn covenant for the maintenance of the truly Reformed Protestant religion, against Popery and Prelacy, and against all Popish and Prelatical corruptions, in doctrine, discipline, worship, or church government; and for the settling and holding fast of unity and uniformity betwixt the kirks of this Island, and with the best Reformed churches beyond sea. Which union and covenant shall, with God's assistance, be seconded by their co-operating with their brethren in the use of the best and most effectual means that may serve for so good ends. For the more speedy effectuating whereof, to the comfort and enlargement of their distressed brethren, (whose hope deferred might make their

hearts to faint,) the whole Assembly with great unanimity of judgment, and expressions of much affection have approved (for their part) such a draught and form of a mutual league and covenant betwixt the kingdoms, as was the result of the joint debates and consultations of the commissioners from both Houses, assisted by the two reverend divines, and of the committees deputed from the Convention of the estates of this kingdom, and from the General Assembly. Expecting and wishing the like approbation thereof by the right honorable the Lords and Commons in Parliament, and by the reverend Assembly there, that thereafter it may be solemnly sworn and subscribed in both kingdoms, as the surest and straightest obligation to make both stand and fall together in that cause of religion and liberty.

As the estates of this kingdom have often professed, in their former Declarations, the integrity of their intentions against the common enemies of religion and liberty in both kingdoms, and their great affection to their brethren of England, by reason of so many and so near relations: so doubtless now, in this time of need, they will not fail to give real proof of what they before professed. *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.* Neither shall the Assembly, or their commissioners, be wanting in exhorting all others to their duty, or in concurring, so far, as belongeth to their place and vocation, with the estates now convened, in any lawful and possible course which may most conduce to the good of religion and reformation, the honor and happiness of the king's majesty, the deliverance of their brethren of England from their present calamitous condition, and to the perpetuating of a firm and happy peace betwixt the kingdoms.

[To be continued.]

ART. VII. *The Reformed Presbyterian Church.*

SERIOUS difficulties have of late agitated this branch of the visible church. It is doubtless well known to our readers, that an unhappy *schism* has taken place in the above named Body, in this country. This was effected at the meeting of their General Synod in August last, by one of the contending parties removing, before the court was constituted, to another place and constituting by themselves. The cause of this division appears to have been a diversity, (or at least a supposed diversity) of sentiment respecting the established principles of their church, on the subject of its civil relations. From the following article, which we copy from "THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN," (a respectable paper published under the patronage of the Secession Church in Ireland,) we learn, that the Reformed Presbyterians, in that country, have also been involved in difficulties arising from a diversity of views respecting their principles on the subject of the magistrate's power *circa sacra*. The Rev. Mr. Houston, the editor of THE COVENANTER, had in that paper asserted and defended the magistrate's right to punish heretics and idolaters. In this he had been opposed by the Rev. Mr. Paul, the excellent author of "ARIANISM REFUTED." The consequence was that Mr. Houston libelled Mr. Paul and some others, who had espoused his cause, before the Synod. The following is a brief account of the trial and its issue.

On Tuesday the 9th of July, the Annual Meeting of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, was held in Moneymore, when the Moderator for the past year, the Rev. Thomas Houston, of Knockbracken, delivered a discourse from Rev. ii. 10, "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" The Rev. J. Sweeny, of Faughan, near Derry, was then chosen Moderator for the present year, after which, the remainder of the day was spent in the arrangement of routine business; and on Wednesday the Synod was occupied chiefly with interlocutory matters, preparatory to the investigation of one of the most extraordinary cases that have been brought before a Presbyterian judicatory, for at least, half a century. This case, which had excited intense interest, not only in the Reformed Presbyterian body itself, but generally amongst the members of other communities, was formally taken up by the Synod on Thursday, and, in order that our readers may understand its merits, a few words of explanation will be necessary.

When the Periodical called the *Covenanter* was about to be established, it was at first put under a committee of management, with which committee the Rev. Thos. Houston became dissatisfied, and assumed to himself the exclusive direction of the Periodical. After some time, various articles appeared in it on the subject of the civil magistrate's power in ecclesiastical matters, enforcing it as one of his special duties in a christian state, to root out and extirpate by the sword heretics and idolaters. The Rev. John Paul, of Carrickfergus, whose merits, as an able and successful defender of the doctrinal peculiarities of the christian system, are well known to the religious public, felt himself called upon to disown the tenets put forward in the *Covenanter* which tenets he conceived, went to justify persecution; and, with this view, he published a letter in the *Belfast News-Letter*, contrasting the doctrines of the *Covenanter* with the authorized explanations of the Reformed Presbyterian church, on the subject of magistral interference. Mr. Houston replied, declining a newspaper controversy, and threatening to bring Mr. Paul under the censure of the church for writing against him, instead of complaining to his Presbytery. Articles, however, continued to be published in the *Covenanter*, to which articles Mr. Paul replied in an elaborate pamphlet, entitled "*The Covenanter Reviewed,*" &c. A number of other matters were also mixed up with the controversy; the result of which was, that at the meeting of Synod in Belfast, last year, Mr. Houston exhibited a *libel*, containing a long catalogue of charges against Mr. Paul and implicating as accomplices four of Mr. Paul's friends, viz:—the Rev. Messrs. Alexander, C. Houston, Henry, and Orr, because they had assisted in circulating Mr. Paul's pamphlet.—The whole matter was referred to the adjudication of the Synod, this year at Moneymore.

After a great deal of discussion, about matters of form, it was at length arranged on Thurs-

day, that Mr. Paul should be tried separately, and that the other ministers should also have separate trials. The first part of the case related to the conduct of the Northern Presbytery, in allowing Mr. Houston to deliver a long speech against Mr. Paul at one of their meetings, when Mr. Paul was absent, and when, even if he had been present, he was not amenable to their authority. The Presbytery were acquitted of any evil intention, but the conduct Mr. Houston was censured as irregular and disorderly. The second part of the case included the Rev. Thomas Houston's charges against Mr. Paul, the most remarkable feature of which was Mr. Paul's alleged doctrinal error in denying the right of the civil magistrate to *restrain and punish, by the power of the sword, heretics and idolaters*—in other words, all whom Reformed Presbyterian Church, acting under the infallible guidance of such liberal christians as Mr. Houston, *should judge to be infected with the leaven of heresy or idolatry!* On this, and the other subjects connected with it, Mr. Houston spoke for nearly eight hours, and one of the principal objects of his speech was to enforce the position that the *judicial law of Moses is not repealed*—that it is still *authoritatively binding upon christian states and christian magistrates*—that the *penal laws* of the old dispensation against *erroneous opinions* in religion are no more repealed than the laws against *robbery or murder*, and consequently that it is the *duty* of the magistrate to enforce those penal laws. He also insisted that, as this opinion was a part of the creed of our Presbyterian ancestors, we are bound to adhere to it—that the penal laws against heretics and Papists, which were passed after the Reformation, were embodied in the national Covenant, and were solemnly sworn to by Covenanters every time that they sat down to the Lord's table. Even a *passive toleration* of erroneous sects, by which is meant, simply *allowing men to live uninjured*, and to retain their religious peculiarities, he characterised, in the words of Act and Testimony, as “the *cut-throat* of all true religion,” and he joined with the Auchensauigh renovators in regarding as a “*sin to be mourned over before God*,” the non-execution in modern times of the penal statutes of the reforming period, one of which statutes ordained, that every *Papist* who should be convicted a *third time* of hearing mass should be punished with *death!* To this act, and others of a similar tendency, the Rev. Thomas Houston acknowledged his belief that he was solemnly bound, and he reiterated and pressed the sentiment, that whatever the Jewish magistrate did in regard to the suppression of error, the Christian magistrate might do for a similar object—nay, that he was bound to do it in conformity with the written law of heaven. He would not, however, say that he would inflict *capital* punishment; he would leave that to the discretion of the magistrate: and here was the marvel; for if the *law* be unrepealed, the *penalty* must remain in full force in every case of transgression, since it is the *law-maker alone*, who can interfere with it in the way either of mitigation or removal, the duty of the legal functionary being restricted to the simple act of seeing its provisions *faithfully* carried into effect, and so much as this Mr. Houston has himself acknowledged in his publications. To do Mr. Houston justice, he confessed that he would not think of carrying his principles into effect “*till an after day*,” when the nation would be thoroughly *reformed*—that is, when *Covenanters would be in possession of civil and political authority!* How merciful in this young divine to keep his hands off his heretical neighbors so long as he knows that he has not the *power* of doing them injury! He would let men *hold* as many opinions as they please, but they must *conceal* them—how indulgent!

Mr. Paul replied at considerable length, resting his defence as a member of the covenanted church, on the fact, that the principles of toleration which he had maintained were the identical principles which the church itself had repeatedly avowed in its authorised explanations of the sense in which those passages of the Standards, which refer to the magistrate's power, were to be received. He also entered into an able examination of the two dispensations; and showed, with great force of argument, the utter inapplicability of the principle of the Jewish theocracy to Christian states, unless there were in the latter, as there was in the former, a visible, *infallible* authority, to whom references could be made, and whose immediate response should definitively settle every point of religious controversy. The principles which had been advanced by Mr. Houston, he could not avoid regarding as the very essence of persecution, and calculated to lead different sectaries to exterminate each other, whenever they should feel themselves strong enough to set about it with any prospect of success. He regretted that in the 19th century, and in a Protestant community, he should be compelled to fight over again the battle of civil and religious liberty, and to assail principles, from the very imputation of which, even Popery was anxious to free itself.

On Saturday, the case was issued by the Synod's unanimous concurrence, in a set of resolutions which had been prepared by a select committee. These resolutions merely affirmed a number of general principles relative to the mediatorial headship of Christ over the nations, and the duty of magistrates and subjects to promote true religion, and to suppress error by *all scriptural means*, without, of course, stating what these “scriptural means” might be. In conclusion, all *persecution for religious opinions* was strongly condemned, as was also the opinion that men might be injured, merely because they differed from Covenanters. In reference to the conduct of the two parties concerned, Mr. Houston was strongly censured for having violated his engagement with the committee, and positive disapprobation was expressed of ministers of the same body writing in opposition to each other. Mr. Houston offered an apology to Messrs. Alexander, Clarke Houston, &c., for having published his charges against them in the *Covenanter*, and, in consequence, these ministers did not press their right to a trial.

Thus was amicably terminated, *ad interim*, a controversy, which had been on the very point of rending the Reformed Presbyterian body in Ireland, and we hope we may regard it as the last effort that will ever be made to fasten a system of judaizing bondage, or anti-christian intolerance, upon the descendants of men, whose blood was shed in defence of our civil and religious FREEDOM.